

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED UPGRADING
OF THE MR238 BETWEEN SALDANHA BAY AND VREDENBURG.

Prepared for Knight, Hall, Hendry and Associates.

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INTRODUCTION

I have been asked to assess the possible archaeological impact of the proposed upgrading of the MR238 between Saldanha Bay and Vredenburg. The input includes:

1. A general description of the archaeology of the area.
2. Whether or not any archaeologically significant sites occur in the surrounding areas that may be affected by the siting of borrow pits.
3. If any archaeological sites exist on the 30m strip of land adjacent to the existing road.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF VREDENBURG AND SALDANHA BAY.

The archaeological significance of Vredenburg is well established. As recently as 1991/1992 an archaeological survey of the area located 132 stone artefact scatters in the area. These sites were found within a small radius of the numerous granite outcrops which dot the landscape, in the beach dunes, and in other sandy terrain. The sites have been distinguished as belonging either to San (Bushmen) hunter-gatherers, or Khoi (Hottentot) herders.

Based on the results of excavations, a systematic sampling programme, and the results of the survey, the Vredenburg settlement patterns show a trajectory of change from coastal occupations in the earliest period, to an episode of inland hunter-gatherer occupation which around 1800-1400 years ago changed into, or was supplemented with a group of inland herder occupations. After \pm 1100 years ago there was a reversion to coastal settlements, which changed again, \pm 700 years ago, to an episode of inland hunter-gatherer occupations. This seems to have been the final pre-colonial phase of occupation in the peninsula.

In Saldanha Bay, however, very little research or investigation has been undertaken. Apart from some localized coastal surveys, we know very little of the archaeology of the region. Unlike Vredenburg, no extensive excavations or sampling of sites has taken place in the region. It is not unlikely that should a systematic survey of the area take place comparable to that of Vredenburg, many more sites of similar significance would be recorded.

BORROW PITS.

The existing borrow pits along the MR238 are located close to or among the granite outcrops that occur along the route. As the Vredenburg archaeological survey showed, many of the sites located were found within a small radius of the granite outcrops.

Where the existing borrow pits are located along the MR238 route, it is unlikely that any *in-situ* (or undisturbed) archaeological sites or remains, exist. Those that do exist are likely to be damaged or disturbed. However, should these pits continue to be exploited, a survey of the borrow pit

sites should be undertaken in case any archaeological evidence remains.

Any new borrow pit sites identified would need to be searched for archaeological sites or remains.

SURVEY.

A random survey of six locations along the eastern boundary of the MR238 failed to locate any archaeological sites, or the remains of sites. Most of the land on either side of the road has been cultivated. Two of the search sites were among natural fynbos vegetation.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. No significant archaeological sites or remains will be affected by the proposed upgrading of the MR238.
2. Should existing borrow pits be exploited, an archaeological survey of these pits is necessary. Should any remaining evidence be noted, this may be rescued.
3. New borrow pits should be searched for archaeological evidence. There is a strong likelihood of sites being found here, if the borrow pits are sited close to or among the granite outcrops.